

An Unlikely Asian Century

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The 19th century was the European century, the 20th century was the American century and the 21st century is believed to be an Asian century. While this century has 86 more years to go, Asia is unlikely to be the sole dominant political and cultural power.

Out of the big Asian players, none has risen, nor is likely to rise, as the dominant power and the sum of all Asian countries isn't likely to have the capacity to dominate the world.

First things first, the big Asian players, like China, India, Japan and Korea are busy with their own domestic issues.

The populations of China and India come with their own social issues requiring tight control to prevent social chaos. Japan and Korea are busy with their economic agendas, ensuring that they get through the global crisis with flying colours. Korea with its unification plan needs all the political strength to focus on its success.

Second, the second-tier Asian players, like Indonesia and other Southeast Asian countries do not have enough momentum to propel them to political and cultural megastardom. Either individually or as a group, Southeast Asian countries are climbing uphill due to limited experience and poverty, excluding Singapore.

Third, G7 countries (US, UK, France, Germany, Italy, Canada and Japan) are still leading the world with their soft power, despite their economies being in a big mess and their net wealth having dwindled. With their combined experience of more than a millennium, G7 countries are maintaining the status quo of world political and cultural power.

Fourth, the US, despite being a "frugal superpower", continues playing the role of "the world police" even though they need to borrow funding from China, the world's "lending bank".

The US has showed no sign of stepping down from the highest place of the "policing the world" totem pole. Its latest military base in Niger is an attempt of a superpower in a midlife crisis to show its remaining power to the world.

It is extremely interesting to notice that the grandfather of capitalism is now borrowing